

Dear Friends,

In mid-July a number of us went to hear some “peace activists” at TAMU-CC. They had been on the ships that the Israeli navy stopped at the end of May and were intent on telling their story. Much of their concern was about the blockade that Israel, Egypt, the U.S. and the European Union have erected around Gaza to prevent contraband (especially weapons) from being brought into the area.

Joe Loon of our congregation stood up to make a wise and salient point. He said that, if Hamas would honestly drop its intention to destroy Israel and its Jewish inhabitants, the blockade to which these folks objected would disappear instantly. Their response was that we can't talk to Hamas because it is understood to be a terrorist organization. This, in fact, was not a response that addressed Joe's eminently cogent point; it was a deflection from his intent and the reality of what he suggested.

The next morning, I opened my e-mails and read a story about a school in Beersheva, Israel. I am going to reproduce for you a large part of that story because I think you need to ask yourselves a simple question. “Is it conceivable that Hamas would sponsor such a school in the Gaza Strip, or, to the contrary, will they continue to indoctrinate their children with anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish hate?”

It seems to me that, until Hamas is prepared to take some concrete steps toward peace and mutual understanding, Israel is compelled to take whatever security measures it deems fit, including maintaining the blockade. They can always do things better, and they have modified some of their policies as a result of the May flotilla debacle, but the legitimate defense needs of the Jewish state mandate that they remain ever vigilant and prepared.

Shalom,

Kenneth D. Roseman, Rabbi